



BROCKTON TRAFFIC COMMISSION

March 22, 2012

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

The Traffic Commission held its monthly meeting at 7:00 p.m. on March 22, 2012, at the Brockton Police Station, 7 Commercial Street, Brockton, MA 02302. An informal discussion was held until a quorum was present. At that time, there being a proper quorum, the meeting was officially called to order by Captain Steven Williamson. Present were: Captain Leon McCabe, Chief Richard Francis, Paul Sullivan, Ken Galligan and Councilor Todd Petti. Several residents of the Plain Street/Tenth Avenue area were in attendance: Steve Broberg, Donna Beals, Jasmine Detulio, Ed Pasco and Al Boone. Also present were Marc Resnick of the Brockton Redevelopment Authority and Tom Loughlin of the BSC Group.

Upon motion made by Ken Galligan, seconded by Paul Sullivan, and a unanimous vote of the members present, it was voted to waive reading and accept the February Minutes.

PLAIN STREET and TENTH AVENUE

Request from Councilor Paul Studenski on behalf of Donna Beals and other residents to review the parking problems occurring on Plain Street and Tenth Avenue as a result of cars parking there to pick up students from the Davis School.

Patricia Florio informed the Commission members and residents present that Councilor Paul Studenski had notified her office that he was at an out-of-town meeting and would not be able to attend the meeting. He requested that the Commission listen to the residents' concerns and refer the matter to Subcommittee for review.

Ken Galligan explained to the residents that the normal procedure is to put an item on the agenda, listen to what the residents have to say and then refer the matter to Subcommittee so that the members can go to the location and then at the next meeting take a formal vote on what steps to take to resolve the problems. Captain Williamson explained that the members are already aware of the situation but that procedures have to be followed. Donna Beals of Tenth Avenue explained to the members that this is a dead end street and they have no alternate way to go. When school is letting out and the cars are parked there, they have to go halfway onto Plain Street before they can see whether there is oncoming traffic and it is a dangerous situation. There is also a triple family home on the corner and cars from that house will park on their street near the corner also. She believes that people

don't realize that they cannot park right up to the corner and if there is a sign there they might not park there, or at least if cars park there then the neighbors could tell them to move because it is posted no parking. Ken Galligan asked if the problem was during school hours and whether nights, weekends and holidays were also a problem. The neighbors said that it was sporadic, but that the cars park right on the corner all the time, even at midnight, and that you cannot see over or around the cars onto Plain Street. The neighbors believe that they are taking their life in their hands trying to get out of their street because of the cars parking there. One neighbor indicated that it is not as bad in the morning as it is in the afternoon. Another neighbor indicated that the cars park mostly on Plain Street but cars also park on Tenth Avenue, and will even park blocking their driveways or turn around in their driveways. Ken Galligan informed the residents that the law states that you cannot park within twenty feet of an intersection, and asked the residents if the problem would be resolved if no cars could park within twenty feet of the intersection of Tenth Avenue and Plain Street. The neighbors indicated that there is also a telephone pole and a driveway in that vicinity and that cars park in the crosswalk also. Mrs. Beals believes that the problem has gotten worse since the Davis School was expanded from kindergarten to grade 8 and there are a lot more people picking up their children. The neighbors do not want to have confrontations with the people who park there. Ken Galligan informed the residents that the Subcommittee would go to the area on Tuesday, April 10th to view the area; Captain Williamson informed them that it was not necessary for them to be there, but they could meet the members there if they wanted to join them.

Upon motion made by Ken Galligan, seconded by Paul Sullivan and a unanimous vote of the members present, it was

VOTED: To refer the matter to Subcommittee for review.

OAK STREET STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS

Request presented by Councilor Chris MacMillan on behalf of the Brockton Redevelopment Authority to have the Traffic Commission review a proposal for streetscape improvements along Oak Street in the vicinity of the entrances to D.P. Field Park. The purpose of this project is to reduce vehicle speeds, increase the connectivity between the two sections of the park and improve the overall look of the park.

Marc Resnick, Director of the Brockton Redevelopment Authority presented the members with plans of the existing layout of the area and the proposed improvements. They are looking to curb the islands, restripe the lanes to reduce speeds, add a crosswalk and improve the landscaping on the islands. The proposal is to have an 11 foot travel lane; have a 5 foot bike lane on the sidewalk side of the roadway and then have a 1 foot gutter line where the new curbing would be installed along the islands; that would give a 17 foot wide paved area curb to curb, currently it varies between 20 and 22 feet of pavement along

the entire stretch. He believes that the 17 feet would allow for a fire truck or other emergency vehicle to pass a vehicle pulled over to the curb. Ken Galligan asked why a drawing wasn't submitted showing the proposed changes and Mr. Resnick said that they needed to move forward with this project and would like to get it under construction in April, and he did not want to have an engineering plan drawn and then have to change it. Ken Galligan said that the plan submitted does not show any of the driving width between the islands and the gutter, other than what Mr. Resnick is telling the members, and it does not show the crossovers that he wants to close down. Ken Galligan stated that the west end of the island has been hit many times and there are 3 cement bollards that have been placed there and they have been hit many times. The other issue is that the traffic signal is constantly being hit, and there should have been an arm put on the traffic signal for cars going west on Oak Street. He asked if that could be incorporated into this streetscape project. Mr. Resnick said that Tom Loughlin, who was not there for this project but for another issue on the agenda, could give them information on the crosswalks. Discussion was held regarding a crosswalk proposed to be added in front of the Art Museum, and Captain McCabe suggested that it might be dangerous to have a crosswalk in an area where cars travel at 40mph and that it is preferred to direct people down to the traffic lights and have them cross there. Mr. Resnick said they wanted to have two additional crosswalks. Ken Galligan stated that he drives this road every day and he feels that the west end of the island should be moved back 10 to 15 feet, then the telephone pole with light would light up that entire west end area which is now in shadows. He further stated that many emergency vehicles use this route to get to the hospital, not just Brockton but Avon and Holbrook and other towns also, and he would be very concerned about narrowing the roadway. He also stated that someone riding a bicycle with a designated bike path would be in danger. Mr. Resnick said that they do this in many cities and usually when emergency vehicles come, cars pull over to the curb. Mr. Resnick said that he does not believe he has seen striped bike lanes anywhere in Brockton and this is a new idea. Given the location near the park, he feels it would be a benefit.

Ken Galligan stated that he feels it would be a mistake to put a crosswalk where the waterfall is, because if someone came across Oak Street and stood on the middle island, now they have to wait for a break in cars traveling on Oak Street, and if someone steps out from the island there would be trouble. He did think it would be a good idea to close off the crossovers and Mr. Resnick said that they plan to close off the second one on either end. The first one on the east end has to remain open for access for the Park Department. Ken Galligan asked what happens to the bike lane after the divided area, at the art center, and Mr. Resnick said that it disappears at that point. Further up on Oak Street there is an extra lane and a left turn lane.

Tom Loughlin indicated that street can be lined to redirect traffic to a narrower lane, which usually reduces the traffic speed. He also indicated that although Mr. Resnick has planned a designated bike lane, a lane that would accommodate bicyclists could also be done. The

accommodation of a bike lane allows for the shoulder of the road to be used for other purposes also, rather than being dedicated to a bike lane. Captain McCabe stated that if you stripe the bike lane, then the maintenance will be impossible. Mr. Loughlin said that just the shoulder stripe should be enough protection for a bicyclist. Chief Francis asked if a rumble strip could be installed instead but Mr. Resnick did not think that was able to be done. Councilor Todd Petti asked what the cost of the project was slated to be and Mr. Resnick said that it was between \$60,000 and \$70,000. Councilor Petti asked where ADA fits into the project and Mr. Resnick stated that if they added a new crosswalk then it would need an HP ramp and a cut-through on the center island but that is not part of the project. Ken Galligan asked whether the travel lane was going to be reduced from 22 feet to 19 feet, and Mr. Resnick said that the narrowest part is 20 feet; Ken Galligan asked which section was the narrowest and Mr. Resnick responded that he did not know. Mr. Resnick said it has to be a minimum of 5 feet to be a dedicated bike lane, and Tom Loughlin explained that it has to be a minimum of 5 feet to be a dedicated use and have the diamond shaped symbols. Mr. Loughlin stated that Mass. Highway or DOT recognizes a 4 foot lane as accommodating a bicycle but not dedicating the lane to bicycles. Ken Galligan asked if we would be better off taking the stance that we are accommodating a bike lane as opposed to dedicating a bike lane, and Mr. Loughlin said absolutely yes. If it is dedicated then it has to be marked and maintained, and it is expensive to do that, but you can put a shoulder line at 4 feet or 5 feet or wherever width you want, and not have it be a dedicated lane.

Todd Petti made a motion to refer the matter to Subcommittee, which was seconded by Paul Sullivan. On the motion, further discussion was held regarding the time frame for the work. Mr. Resnick said that it was his plan to meet with the engineer the day after the Traffic Commission meeting, the plans would be done in one week and then the project would go to T.L. Edwards. Captain McCabe indicated that if the members wanted to vote on the issue that night they could do it without forwarding it to Subcommittee. Discussion was held as to whether the issue should be voted on at that meeting, or to possibly schedule a special Traffic Commission meeting. Todd Petti said that he would withdraw his motion and Paul Sullivan withdrew his second of the motion to refer the matter to Subcommittee.

Chief Francis suggested that the plan might be approved with stipulations, similar to what happens at the Zoning Board. To put things in perspective, Ken Galligan outlined the concern about the width of the road, stated that at least two crossovers would be shut down, and a protective bumper would be put in front of the crosswalk at the east end. He also stated that it is his opinion that the City would have less liability if the lane were an accommodation rather than a dedicated lane. Marc Resnick stated that he would like to keep the lane at 5 feet so that if in the future the City has a staff planner and they work on a bike plan and eventually can tie it in, then it is already striped for 5 feet and you could add the symbols whereas if it is striped at 4 feet you can never add the symbols.

Ken Galligan stated that in the past requests have been made for a pedestrian crosswalk signal at the east end of the island, but the Signal Division did a cost estimate and it was beyond the funds available. He asked if there was any way that could be included in this project and Mr. Resnick said he has no idea how much that might cost.

Mr. Resnick said that he has a short timeframe as he has to spend some CDBG funds and that he had not been aware at first that he had to go before the Traffic Commission on this issue, he thought he could just go to D.P.W. Commissioner Thoreson for approval. Secondly, T.L. Edwards will be starting another large project in May and Mr. Resnick needs to have this project done before that. Ken Galligan said that this project will narrow the roadway by 9 feet. Marc Resnick said that he prefers to refer to it as striping an 11 foot travel lane to keep people in a particular lane to slow down traffic and keep it at a consistent speed, and that in order to allow emergency vehicles they are allowing another 7 feet of pavement: 5 feet to the right and 2 feet to the left, which gives you 18 feet. It is a narrowing of the pavement width of 2 feet in some areas, up to 4 feet in other areas. Todd Petti said that it is narrowing it only by a line on the street and not a physical change and Ken Galligan stated that there would be a physical change. Mr. Resnick said that it would be both, because they will install curbs along the islands. Todd Petti asked if it were possible to install electricity in the island area in order to eventually allow for lighting of Christmas lights in that area and asked Mr. Resnick to get a cost estimate.

Ken Galligan stated that this is a critical decision to be made and Paul Sullivan stated that it should go to Subcommittee. Ken Galligan agreed and said it was his opinion that the area needed to be reviewed.

Upon motion made by Ken Galligan, seconded by Todd Petti and a unanimous vote of the members present, it was

VOTED: To refer the matter to Subcommittee for review.

MASSWORKS PROJECT

Request from Councilor Dennis DeNapoli on behalf of the Brockton Redevelopment Authority to review the Massworks Project, which would light and reconstruct the railroad underpasses in the downtown area and repave a portion of Commercial Street. Some adjustments to curbing and lane striping are proposed as part of the project.

Marc Resnick of the BRA and Tom Loughlin of the BSC Group presented plans showing the project for reconstruction of the roadway and light the tunnels between Court Street and School Street, as well as do improvements on Commercial Street. The project involves some adjustments to curbings and striping and includes new street lights and lighting within the tunnels.

Tom Loughlin said that this is an improvements projects for which the City received a grant. Construction costs are approximately \$1.35 million and the project covers five streets: Court Street, Centre Street, Lincoln Street, School Street and Crescent Street. Each of the streets runs east to west and one of the main focuses of the job is to improve the lighting in the area and connect the downtown area with the transportation area and the post office, and to get people to travel back and forth in that area. Curbing will be modified to be more consistent and there will be all new sidewalks. They have spoken with the businesses and property owners in the area and received their input. Discussions have begun with the MBTA and fixtures will be hung on the tunnel arches to cast more light down onto the street and sidewalk. Another feature will be that each of the approaches to the bridges will have signage so that when truck drivers are driving to the area they will have advance warning of the bridge height. All signs will be replaced with better reflectivity. Captain McCabe asked if the road could be lowered and Mr. Loughlin said that they had looked at that, but there is not enough road cover over some of the utilities to lower the road and still have a structural base over them. Some of the drain lines in the city are extremely old, and in order to get even inches you would have to replace the drain lines. Captain McCabe indicated that Court Street is the bridge most often hit and if the street could be lowered even 6 inches it would be good. Ken Galligan brought up that the bridges are on the National Historic Register and wanted to make sure that the changes are approved. Mr. Loughlin said that he was aware of that and they are talking with the T about the issue, and they have allowed similar type work in a number of other locations. Discussion was held about the drainage issues in the areas under the bridges, and the cause was determined to be old pipes and pipes of small diameter, which will be changed over to twelve inch pipes. This will increase the drainage capacity and alleviate the flooding problems. Mr. Loughlin indicated that they will walk the job site with Department of Public Works employees and that Commissioner Thoreson is on the committee so he is aware of the proposed changes. The Lincoln Street area has some separate issues as the underpass is only a pedestrian underpass and it currently has a grate over it and is closed and locked. Without heavier activity and occupation in the downtown area, the plan is to make improvements but leave the underpass closed until a future date.

Mr. Loughlin stated that Massworks is a good program for cities and towns, built around cities just like Brockton, with the project close to transportation and having an economic development component where you are supporting new infrastructure. There is a very tight timeline and this job must be completed by June, 2013. They are requiring that the project is in the ground by May, 2012. He welcomed the commission members to come down and walk the project site, either now or in the future. Todd Petti brought up the issue of the red paver crosswalks that were installed and stated that they are broken and cracked. Mr. Loughlin said that they have already viewed them and if the money is available they are looking to replace them. Ken Galligan stated that the project is pretty straightforward and suggested that the project be approved.

Upon motion made by Ken Galligan, seconded by Chief Francis and a unanimous vote of the members present, it was

VOTED: To approve the Massworks Project as presented.

PARKING TICKET BOOKS

Request from Captain McCabe and Captain Williamson to review the parking violation fines and revise or increase the following:

(11) Parking so as to Obstruct Driveway – Increase fine from \$15.00 to \$20.00

(18) Parking In the First Fire District During Restricted Periods - Remove violation (same as winter ban)

(21) Obstructing HP Ramp – increase fine from \$100.00 to \$150.00 (to be the same as HP Area)

Upon motion made by Chief Francis, seconded by Ken Galligan and a unanimous vote of the members present, it was

VOTED: To approve the recommendations and revise the parking violation fines as recommended by Captain McCabe and Captain Williamson.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, upon motion duly made by Paul Sullivan, seconded by Todd Petti and a unanimous vote of the members present, it was

VOTED: To adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,
Patricia Florio
Secretary to the Traffic Commission